

Promoting English language and American culture through newsletters, virtual facilitation, Facebook



Project Title	Promoting English language and American culture through newsletters, virtual facilitation, Facebook
Project Summary	We seek an Intern to assist in: facilitating and/or prepare materials for periodic sessions of the twice weekly English Conversation Club; producing a quarterly electronic newsletter; and developing Facebook campaigns on American culture and diversity.
Country	Mauritania
Country/Region of Focus	Mauritania

Project Description

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania is seeking an Intern with an interest in public diplomacy, sharing English Language skills and/or English as a Second Language.

The intern will have three primary tasks: 1) facilitate and/or prepare materials for periodic sessions of the twice weekly English Conversation Club; 2) produce at least two issues of a quarterly electronic newsletter, in English, whose readership will be university-aged youth interested in learning about English language and American culture; and 3) develop 2-5 social media (Facebook) campaigns on issues related to U.S. culture and diversity (e.g., a day in the life of a U.S. university student; what it's like to be a university exchange student; job hunting skills; Islam in America; etc.).

Required Skills or Interests

Skill(s)

Cultural diplomacy

Editing and proofreading

Educational design

Additional Information

Periodic English Conversation Club facilitation

Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, a group of 20 – 40 Mauritians (university students, recent high school or university graduates and young professionals/unemployed young people) interested in practicing their English language conversation skills meet at the U.S. Embassy to listen to a presentation and then ask questions and discuss about what they have learned and how it applies to them. This group is called the English Conversation Club. The embassy coordinator for this activity, the American Spaces Manager, has divided the participants into three groups based on their English language level -- low, intermediate and advanced. Facilitation is done by the American Spaces Manager and an English Language Fellow, but we are looking for additional facilitation support for the group. That facilitation could be done by simply preparing materials for local facilitators to discuss with the group, or (preferred) via a video conference set-up in which the virtual intern is actually facilitating the discussion via a live video feed. This diversity will help keep the group interesting for participants.

Newsletter for English Conversation Club participants

PAS staff has produced quarterly newsletters in the past for its English Conversation Club participants, and we have a user friendly newsletter model in MailChimp, however finding time to assemble it on a regular basis has been challenging. Content will include: student poems, English language (ESL) tips, short stories, riddles, American culture elements, English language games, photos, U.S. university information and calendars about local English language events. We would like the intern's assistance in assembling all the materials, which English Conversation Club participants submit via WhatsApp and email; as well as the intern's own contributions, and assembling it all into a newsletter.

Facebook campaigns

The U.S. Embassy to Mauritania attempts to post 1 -2 times per day. Our social media campaigns to date have been very limited due to staff time and capacity. We would like to inject more American elements into our Facebook page, but on themes with which our Mauritanian readership can identify. A campaign by the intern on a day in the life of a U.S. university student, for example, would be popular and would help Mauritanian Fulbright/UGRAD applicants better understand the realities of university life. Similarly, the intern could visit a mosque and film some of the mosque's community-outreach projects. Other themes we are seeking to incorporate and promote in our Facebook feed include: security (everything from countering violent extremism, to women's self defense); Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills for youth; freedom of expression (especially in the arts) and association; youth entrepreneurship; social cohesion and decreasing discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion or tribe, among others; and English language learning.

Facebook campaigns could be video format, illustrations, or plain text with a copyright-free photo.

Our English Conversation Club uses WhatsApp heavily to communicate. We would also like the intern to use WhatsApp to at least track those conversations.

We are seeking to inject energy and more modern techniques into our English Conversation and social media activities despite the technical limitations in Mauritania.

Language Requirements

None